

# **THE SINO-TIBETAN STAND OFF: ASSESSING THE CHINESE RESISTANCE TO THE MIDDLE WAY APPROACH**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines and explains the source of the China's reluctance in considering the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach as an acceptable solution for the Tibet issue. It does so using Alexander Wendt's theoretical framework which argues for the preeminence of process over structure in the transformation of state identities, interests and by extension; state behavior. The application of this framework proves that the present Chinese attitude is perpetuated by the continuing effects of its transition from a Confucian empire into a Han nation-state. In doing so, this work argues that historical perceptions and active strategic, ideological and material factors (during this transition and post) were and are instrumental in influencing China's state behavior towards the Tibetan government-in-exile and particularly its attitude to the Middle Way Approach.

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## List of Abbreviations

MWA – Middle Way Approach

TGIE–Tibetan government-in-exile

CTA– Central Tibetan Administration

PRC– People’s Republic of China

IR– International Relations

TAR –Tibetan Autonomous Region

CCP– Chinese Communist Party

PLA- People’s Liberation Army

IV– Independent Variable

DV– Dependent Variable

EU– European Union

HKSAR– Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

UNHCR– United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

## Chapter 1- Introduction

On June 15<sup>th</sup> 1988, the Dalai Lama presented a proposal aimed at resolving the sensitive and so-far intractable Tibet issue with China.<sup>1</sup> Known as the Strasbourg Proposal due to the venue of declaration, it featured an extension of the five-point peace plan of 1987, and called for the transformation of Tibet into a zone of peace.<sup>2</sup> It additionally called for the respect of human rights, democratic ideals, environmental protection and the cessation of deliberate Chinese population transfers into Tibet. Most significantly, the fifth point called for solution-oriented negotiations between the parties.<sup>3</sup> The proposal was strategically delivered using the forum of the European Parliament and was directed at the Chinese Central government.

The Dalai Lama, while elaborating on his and the Tibetan government-in-exile<sup>4</sup> (TGIE) thoughts for the way forward, presented a framework of demands that evolved into what later came to be collectively known as the Middle Way Approach (MWA). The MWA advocates for “genuine” Tibetan autonomy within the framework of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and ultimately strives to give the population living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet<sup>5</sup> a degree of autonomy comparable to that attained by Hong Kong at the end of its ninety-nine year British lease; using the precedent of the “one country two systems” policy.<sup>6</sup> The MWA is claimed by the

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<sup>1</sup> When referring to the People’s Republic of China, I will use the acronym PRC or China interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> “Strasbourg Proposal 1988 | The Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama,” accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/strasbourg-proposal-1988>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> TGIE calls itself the Central Tibetan Administration or CTA; see, “Constitution - Central Tibetan Administration,” accessed May 28, 2014, <http://tibet.net/about-cta/constitution/>.

<sup>5</sup> Tibet comprises of the three traditional provinces (collectively known as Cholka sum) of **Amdo** (administered by China as the provinces of Qinghai, Gansu & Sichuan), **Kham** (largely incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai), and **Ü-Tsang** (which, together with western Kham, is referred to as the Tibet Autonomous Region); see “Tibet at a Glance - Central Tibetan Administration,” accessed May 28, 2014, <http://tibet.net/about-tibet/tibet-at-a-glance/>.

<sup>6</sup> “The Middle-Way Approach: A Framework for Resolving the Issue of Tibet - Central Tibetan Administration,” accessed April 29, 2014, <http://tibet.net/important-issues/sino-tibetan-dialogue/the-middle-way-approach-a-framework-for-resolving-the-issue-of-tibet-2/>.

Dalai Lama and Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) to be the best non-partisan and moderate position capable of safeguarding the vital interests of all concerned parties.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that this moderate position is a significant departure from the one held by the Dalai Lama and his government-in-exile since having fled Lhasa in 1959. Up until 1979, the focus had been the singular pursuit of Tibetan Independence. This departure has been attributed by him and the CTA as a response to the changing political, military and economic world order as well as to the evolving concepts of nationality and interdependency between nations.<sup>8</sup> He has gone on to claim the MWA as “analogous” to the 17-point agreement signed by him when China absorbed Tibet in 1951 and continually emphasizes the absence of any demands for outright Tibetan independence.<sup>9</sup> However, there is growing conjecture regarding the future prospects of the Middle Way Approach in light of the Dalai Lama’s advancing years and retirement from the CTA (considering the virtual synonymy of the Dalai Lama’s name with the cause for Tibetan autonomy).<sup>10</sup>

The approach itself has been met with various degrees of support, skepticism and outright dismissal across the various quarters. Most of the international community (notably the US and the rest of the West) broadly support the Middle Way Approach.<sup>11</sup> However interestingly, the Indian official stance not only recognizes Tibet as an integral part of China but also does not recognize the Tibetan government-in-exile that operates from its own soil and employs carefully worded official statements that refrain from taking a clear position on the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> “Strasbourg Proposal 1988 | The Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama.” accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/strasbourg-proposal-1988>.

<sup>9</sup> “The Middle-Way Approach.”

<sup>10</sup> “In India, Tibet’s Government-in-Exile Reconsiders Its Goals,” *Stratfor Analysis*, September 2013, 29–29.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Klein, “An Analysis of China’s Human Rights Policies in Tibet: China’s Compliance with the Mandates of International Law Regarding Civil and Political Rights,” *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law* 18, no. 1 (Fall 2011): 117–118; Jonathan Kaiman, “China Denounces Barack Obama’s Meeting with Dalai Lama,” *The Guardian*, February 21, 2014, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/21/china-us-barack-obama-dalai-lama>; “Obama Throws Support behind Dalai Lama, Tibet Rights,” *Channel NewsAsia*, accessed May 20, 2014, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/obama-throws-support/1008736.html>.

Middle Way Approach.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, there remains some measure of opposition to this approach amongst Tibetan populations and advocacy groups for whom complete Tibetan independence is still the singular solution.<sup>13</sup> All these factors add to the conjecture regarding the prospects of the MWA, both in the lifetime of the Dalai Lama and upon his eventual demise.<sup>14</sup> Having been conferred the Nobel Peace prize in 1989; the Dalai Lama has creatively used his soft power to mobilize support for the Tibetan cause across the globe.<sup>15</sup> Yet China remains unmoved and considers him, his “clique” as being “splittist” and the MWA itself as a blanketed strategy to insert and stir secessionist sentiment in China and thus, a danger to its territorial integrity.<sup>16</sup>

Regardless of Chinese reluctance to even acknowledge the Tibet issue as being an ‘issue’, it would be inaccurate to presume that the Chinese do not stand to benefit from the resolution of the Tibet issue or that the political desire for a resolution does not exist. China is now an economic superpower eager to integrate itself into the international state system. By resolving the Tibet issue once and for all, China stands to solve two long-standing security dilemmas; its internal security as regards Tibet itself and its external security with respect to its

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<sup>12</sup> B.R. Deepak, “India, China and Tibet: Fundamental Perceptions from Dharamsala, Beijing and New Delhi,” *Asian Ethnicity* 12, no. 3 (October 2011): 301–21, doi:10.1080/14631369.2011.605544; Tsering Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute,” *China Report* 47, no. 2 (May 1, 2011): 115–31, doi:10.1177/000944551104700205; Rajiv Sirki, “The Tibet Factor in India-China Relations,” *Journal of International Affairs* 64, no. 2 (Spring/Summer //Spring/Summer2011 2011): 63.

<sup>13</sup> Chok Tsering, “Majority of Tibetans Prefer Genuine Autonomy,” *Tibetan Review: The Monthly Magazine on All Aspects of Tibet* 47, no. 1/2 (February 1, 2012): 20–21; Somini Sengupta, “For Some Young Tibetan Exiles, Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle Way’ Is a Road to Failure,” *New York Times*, March 21, 2008, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Jing Huang, “The Tibet Issue: An Impasse or Entrapment?,” *East Asian Policy* 1, no. 3 (2009): 28–29.

<sup>15</sup> Ekaterina Kurnosenko, *China, the Dalai Lama and the Question of Soft Power*, CEU Political Science Department Master Theses 2010/11 (Budapest: CEU, Budapest College, 2010), 23–37; Melvyn C. Goldstein, *Tibet, China and the United States: Reflections on the Tibet Question* (Atlantic Council of the United States, 1995), 9–10, <http://columbiauniversity.net/itc/ealac/barnett/pdfs/link4-goldstn.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Deepak, “India, China and Tibet,” 307–308; “China Denounces Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle Way’ - Taipei Times,” accessed March 17, 2014, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2013/10/20/2003574925>; Wang Lixiong, “A True ‘Middle-Way’ Solution to Tibetan Unrest,” *China Security* 4, no. 2 (2008): 31–32, [http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/57248/ichaptersection\\_singledocument/b8bf071d-8d73-4f7b-9a36-6d289963e0ca/en/chapter+2.pdf](http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/57248/ichaptersection_singledocument/b8bf071d-8d73-4f7b-9a36-6d289963e0ca/en/chapter+2.pdf); “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *Tibet -- Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation*, accessed April 15, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/>; “Full Text: Development and Progress of Tibet - Xinhua | English.news.cn,” accessed April 15, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c\\_132819442.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c_132819442.htm).

border conflicts with India.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, (and not insignificantly) it stands to make significant gains in soft power by improving its image as a benevolent super power that endorses pluralized society and values human rights.<sup>18</sup> However, in spite of the many endorsements regarding the promise of the MWA, there remains to be any significant or concrete response from the Chinese side towards making any concessions in its favor.

The negotiations between the Chinese Central Government and the CTA remain at a virtual stalemate with very little progress having been achieved since direct negotiations resumed in 2002. Talks hit an especially low point in 2008 during the build up to the Beijing Olympics following the massive uprising across the Tibetan Plateau in March, 2008.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, in July 2008, the Chinese Central Government (as a part of its damage control initiative following the uprising), invited the CTA's inputs and suggestions on the future path of negotiations.<sup>20</sup> In October of 2008, the CTA responded with a Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan people. This memorandum essentially reiterated the principles of the MWA and detailed the demands in eleven key areas as basic needs,<sup>21</sup> on making a single administrative unit of the wider ethnographic Tibet as well as major changes in methods of governmental elections for the region and was followed by a clarifying note in January 26<sup>th</sup> 2010.<sup>22</sup>

In response, the PRC has demanded three “stops”; later refined to “four non-supports”: “not to support activities to disturb the upcoming Beijing Olympic Games, not to support plots to fan violent criminal activities, not to support and concretely curb the violent terrorist activities of the “Tibetan Youth Congress” and not to support any argument and activity to seek “Tibet

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<sup>17</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute,” 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> “Chronology of Tibetan-Chinese Relations, 1979 to 2013,” *International Campaign for Tibet*, accessed March 6, 2014, <http://www.savetibet.org/policy-center/chronology-of-tibetan-chinese-relations-1979-to-2013/>.

<sup>20</sup> Michael C. Davis, “Tibet and China’s ‘National Minority’ Policies,” *Orbis* 56, no. 3 (June 2012): 429–46, doi:10.1016/j.orbis.2012.05.009.

<sup>21</sup> Language, culture, religion, education, environmental protection, natural resources, economic development, public health, public security, population migration and cultural exchanges with other countries.

<sup>22</sup> “Memorandum on Genuine Autonomy for the Tibetan People - Central Tibetan Administration,” accessed May 1, 2014, <http://tibet.net/important-issues/sino-tibetan-dialogue/memorandum-on-genuine-autonomy-for-the-tibetan-people/>.

independence' and split the region from the country".<sup>23</sup> There have been no talks after 31st January, 2010. Nevertheless, despite its tremendous unpopularity with the Chinese government and lack of overt policy support from its host-India, the MWA persistently stays on the official mandate of the Tibetan government in exile as of April, 2014.<sup>24</sup>

The facts above and their brief analysis give rise to the **puzzle** of why the MWA is perceived so differently by China as compared to how it is seen by the CTA and the rest of the world. What drives these alternate perceptions, the resultant policy reactions and what do they entail for the adoption or adaption of the Middle Way Approach? In other words, what explains the continued Chinese reluctance towards considering the Middle Way Approach as an acceptable solution to the so far intractable issue of Tibet?

Thus far, scholars have attempted to explain the Sino-Tibetan equation using narrow frameworks that though successfully assess the nature of the equation, do not explain the root cause of the Chinese reluctance and how it continues to perpetuate itself.<sup>25</sup> While emerging scholars like Tsering Topgyal and Henrik Skaksen Jacobsen have strived to remedy this gap, there persists a lack of objective and theoretical explanation for the rigidity in the Chinese stance in particular.<sup>26</sup>

This thesis seeks to address this gap in research and provide clarity on the source of the Chinese reluctance through the method of discourse analysis whilst employing constructivist and

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<sup>23</sup> "Chinese Official Urges Dalai Lama to Respond with Sincerity after Recent contact\_English\_Xinhua," accessed May 1, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-07/07/content\\_8501087.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-07/07/content_8501087.htm).

<sup>24</sup> "Interview: Lobsang Sangay," *The Diplomat*, accessed June 2, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/04/interview-lobsang-sangay/>; "A 'Middle Way' With China? Interview With Prime Minister Of Tibetan Government-In-Exile," accessed May 20, 2014, <http://www.worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/a-039-middle-way-039-with-china-interview-with-prime-minister-of-tibetan-government-in-exile/tibet-unrest-beijing-conflict-sangay-obama/c1s13646/#.U3tHDNKSySo>.

<sup>25</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon: China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama* (University of California Press, 1997); "Tibet's Dalai Lama; REALPOLITIK FROM THE PRINCE OF SHANGRI-LA," *Christian Science Monitor*, accessed May 15, 2014, [http://www.csmonitor.com/1981/0820/082060.html/\(page\)/2](http://www.csmonitor.com/1981/0820/082060.html/(page)/2); Lina Kutkauskaitė, "Chinese State Policies Towards Tibet and Xinjiang: Why Not the Hong Kong Scenario?," *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, no. 28 (July 2012): 43.

<sup>26</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute"; Henrik Skaksen Jacobsen, "The Tibet-China Question Under Investigation" (Masters, Aalborg University, 2012), [http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/65554213/Master\\_Thesis\\_Final\\_Tibet\\_China.pdf](http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/65554213/Master_Thesis_Final_Tibet_China.pdf).

neo-realist theoretical frameworks as proposed by Alexander Wendt and John J. Mearsheimer.<sup>27</sup> It will do so by first dealing with what it claims are the root causes of the issue and then with equal emphasis assessing the current Chinese attitude towards the MWA.

This work supports arguments that claim alternate perceptions of history, identity, autonomy, suzerainty and sovereignty as the root causes of the six decade long impasse. Wendt's constructivist framework is used to argue that interlinked effects between the said 'constructed' alternate perceptions and various geopolitical factors help explain China's adamant stance on its ownership of Tibet upon which its claim and current policy behavior is staked. In this way, this work seeks to build on recent works by emerging scholars such as Henrik Skaksen Jacobsen and Tsering Topgyal that have respectively explored the use of combinatorial frameworks and cyclical factors to better understand the current Sino-Tibetan impasse.<sup>28</sup>

The next five chapters are devoted to arguing this case and proceeds with details of the research methodology employed (chapter 2) and a review of the literary debates thus far (chapter 3). Thereafter, I proceed with a detailed description of the theoretical framework(s) that are used as the backbone of analysis (chapter 4). This description is followed by tracing the origins of the divergent historical perceptions, how these reflect in Chinese policy on Tibet and its dialogue with the CTA (chapter 5). Chapter 6 proposes and applies an adaptation of Wendt's pattern of interaction (where geopolitical factors and perceptions of history are examined particularly) through which the transformative effects on Chinese perceptions of identity and state interests are explained (6.1). Subsequently, Wendt's arguments on the effect of processes on institutions are used to understand and specifically explain Chinese reluctance to the MWA (6.2). Finally, this thesis presents its concluding remarks based on its findings.

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<sup>27</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (WW Norton & Company, 2001); Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 391; Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 71, doi:10.2307/2539217.

<sup>28</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute"; Jacobsen, "The Tibet-China Question Under Investigation."

## Chapter 2- Research Methodology

The methodology used in this thesis involves the analysis of multi-faceted texts comprising policy, scholarly as well as media-generated discourse that directly or indirectly have a bearing on the issue of Tibet. By using the method of discourse analysis, it becomes possible to effectively juxtapose and evaluate varying representations of perceptions regarding the Tibet issue. It also becomes possible to achieve clarity on why discourses that endorse the MWA are largely dominant and also why China resists the approach as a credible solution. We are then in a position to look for continuity and change in the discourses and to assess whether there have been any tonal changes over the years and what factors and theoretical explanations account for the observed changes or continuities.<sup>29</sup>

As the research process has progressed, it has become necessary to examine the MWA and its implications in order to arrive at an explanation of the central puzzle. However, every endeavor has been made to stay objective and not drift away from the set research agenda and its focus. At the same time, it is not the focus of this thesis to assess the practicality of the Middle Way Approach in itself but to explain the factors behind the overt Chinese dismissal of it.

In order to situate the impasse, the negotiations, the Chinese state behavior and the geopolitical factors behind them into a theoretical paradigm, this thesis utilizes a combinatorial theoretical framework from the works of Wendt and Mearsheimer, who though from distinct schools of IR (constructivist and neo-realist respectively) offer illuminating insight into explaining state behavior. Wendt's work in particular has contributed an analytical bridge through which neo-realist assumptions regarding self-interested states along with constructivist arguments regarding how "identity and interests are transformed", have the collective potential to examine enduring disputes as in the case of the Tibet issue."<sup>30</sup>

The research methodology proposed for this study is also influenced by Iver B. Neumann's piece on discourse analysis. Neumann advocates the use of a three-step approach

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<sup>29</sup> Iver B. Neumann, "Discourse analysis," 2008, 65–75.

<sup>30</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 395.

which recommends a researcher to first delimit texts according to their utility and theoretical applicability, map the various representations by searching out texts for their dominance and asymmetry and focus on their inherent conflicts between them. The third step recommended by Neumann is to layer the various discourses to uncover “historical depth, degree of dominance and marginalization<sup>31</sup>.” Last but not the least, it is important to point out that this research has been stimulated by the recent works of emerging scholars such as Jacobsen and Topgyal.<sup>32</sup> This thesis uses their work as a baseline and builds upon it by zeroing-in on the Chinese attitude to the MWA.

The Chinese side of the discourse is by and large perceived by the mainstream media as a dismissal of the Dalai Lama’s proposals. Closer scrutiny of this marginalized stream of discourse is crucial to arriving at a thorough analysis of its policy action. The limitation in this respect has been to find Chinese discourse that is reliable (given the constraints of free press in China) and that is also available in English. However, in terms of available policy discourse, white papers and other documents issued by the Chinese Central Government in English are widely available on official websites and these have proven useful while sensing the overall tone and tenor of Chinese policy discourse on Tibet. It is important to consider the possible loss in translation that is inherent in any text that is presumably translated from Chinese.

In order to delineate the time frame of the texts studied (so as to not get lost in the sheer volume of discourse); I have narrowed the scope to discourse that emanates post 1980s, when the Tibet issue transitioned into one of significance. However, texts from before that have not been completely eliminated as doing so would have undermined the highly significant historical route to the present predicament.

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<sup>31</sup> Neumann, “Discourse analysis,” 73.

<sup>32</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute”; Jacobsen, “The Tibet-China Question Under Investigation.”

In terms of cultural competency as recommended by Neumann,<sup>33</sup> I can claim to have sufficient levels based on my interaction with Tibetan students in Delhi. However, this (as well as my being Indian) is capable on inflicting a bias in my research and every effort has been made to ensure that this is controlled.

Ideally, such a topic merits field research in the various countries with some emphasis on primary data. However, this has been logistically prohibitive given the time and resource constraints of this thesis. Therefore, given those constraints, the methodology detailed above is an effective means to arrive at an argument regarding the puzzle emergent from the initial analysis.

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<sup>33</sup> Neumann, "Discourse analysis," 63–65.

## Chapter 3- Literature Review

Several prominent scholars have attempted to shed light on the enduring Tibetan question and have sought to “peel away at the layers of the veneer”<sup>34</sup> surrounding the complex issue. This section picks out common and less common themes present in the dominant and marginalized discourses and depictions of the Sino-Tibetan equation, the Tibet issue, Chinese policy and their (state) behavior. By and with the various debates analyzed, it becomes possible to see what angles of the debate may have been overlooked or can be built upon.

It is important to mention that the aim of this literature review is not to comment on each author’s work in the vast scholarship surveyed for this thesis; but to get a condensed idea regarding the “tenor” of the debate so far. With this accomplished, the analysis can proceed to minister to the gaps using the methodology described in the previous chapter.

### Historical Origins of the Tibet Issue

There exists broad consensus on the all-important role of shared but contested history of China and Tibet. This consensus is reflected in the mass of scholarly, media and policy discourse available on the origins and trajectory of the Tibet issue (both Chinese and international). While some of the scholarly work features the obligatory ‘historical background,’ others have delved deeper into how the Tibet issue has come to occupy a ‘grey area’ wherein history and historical representations of events have become highly subject to interpretation.<sup>35</sup>

Melvyn C. Goldstein Dawa Norbu, Parshottam Mehra, Elliot Sperling and John Garver are some prominent scholars that have dissected Sino-Tibetan history from its imperial era in the 7<sup>th</sup> century all the way to the present.<sup>36</sup> They provide valuable insight into the historical dimensions of the current impasse by shedding light on the indirect rule by which Tibet was

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<sup>34</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, x.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 109–111; Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy* (Psychology Press, 2001), chap. 8 and 11.

<sup>36</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*; Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*; John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest : Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century / John W. Garver* (Seattle : University of Washington Press, c2001., 2001); Sumit Ganguly, “Essays in Frontier History: India, China and the Disputed Border – By Parshotam Mehra,” *Historian* 71, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 139–40, doi:10.1111/j.1540-6563.2008.00233\_35.x; Elliot Sperling, “The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics,” *East West Center, Washington*, 2004, 3–35, <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS007.pdf>.

administered from 1260-1950; the transformative effect of the Opium Wars on Confucian ideology;<sup>37</sup> the historical origins of the Tibetan connection to the Sino-Indian border dispute<sup>38</sup> and the period of *de facto* independence enjoyed by Tibet prior to 1949.<sup>39</sup> Emerging scholars such as Jacobsen and Carole McGranahan carry this theme forward with the former examining the contested version of events<sup>40</sup> and the latter exploring the “historical arrest”<sup>41</sup> in the representations of the issue. The ‘burden’ of history on the current impasse has also compelled the Dalai Lama, in his autobiography to insert his version of the detailed ‘history’ of Tibet’s alleged ‘stateness’.<sup>42</sup> This account stands in stark contrast to the various official Chinese white papers which see Sino-Tibetan histories in a way that is quite distinct from the Dalai Lama and the CTA.<sup>43</sup>

### The Persona and Position of the Dalai Lama

Prominent scholars such as Goldstein, Norbu, Garver, Bhavana Tripathy, B.R. Deepak and Michael C. Davis<sup>44</sup> as well as emerging scholars such as Topgyal and Ekaterina Kurnosenko<sup>45</sup> have acknowledged the high level of international sympathy and reverence for the Dalai Lama as a spiritual leader of the Tibetan people.<sup>46</sup> Having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989,

<sup>37</sup> Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 86–98.

<sup>38</sup> Ganguly, “Essays in Frontier History,” 19–58.

<sup>39</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 30–36.

<sup>40</sup> Jacobsen, “The Tibet-China Question Under Investigation,” 2.

<sup>41</sup> Carole McGranahan, “Truth, Fear, and Lies: Exile Politics and Arrested Histories of the Tibetan Resistance,” *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 4 (November 1, 2005): 572, doi:10.1525/can.2005.20.4.570.

<sup>42</sup> Dalai Lama XIV Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile : The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama / [Tenzin Gyatso]* (London : Hodder & Stoughton, c1990, n.d.).

<sup>43</sup> “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *Feudal Serfdom in Old Tibet*, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-4.htm>; Hou Qiang, “Full Text: Development and Progress of Tibet - Xinhua | English.news.cn,” *The Development and Progress in Tibet Is the Inevitable Result of History*, accessed June 1, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c\\_132819442\\_2.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c_132819442_2.htm), “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn”; “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *The Dalai Clique’s Separatist Activities and the Central Government’s Policy*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-3.htm>.

<sup>44</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, ix–xi; Garver, *Protracted Contest*, 68–69; Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, chap. 15 and 16; Bhavana Tripathy, “The Tibetan Uprising and Indian Opinion of the Chinese,” *Journal of Defence Studies* 6, no. 4 (2012): 30; Klein, “An Analysis of China’s Human Rights Policies in Tibet,” 118; Deepak, “India, China and Tibet,” 311; Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 342.

<sup>45</sup> Kurnosenko, *China, the Dalai Lama and the Question of Soft Power*, 14–15; Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 211.

<sup>46</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 111; *ibid*, 119; Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 350.

his significant position in the Tibetan movement for genuine autonomy has been almost institutionalized.

Barry Sautman has brought attention to the superimposition of the positive public persona of the Dalai Lama onto the Tibetan cause itself.<sup>47</sup> According to Barry Sautman and Klein, Hollywood films reinforce these perceptions<sup>48</sup> and Sautman, in particular argues that the perception of the Dalai Lama as an “apostle of peace” is mostly a media generated phenomenon which distracts the world from European war-making and obstructs a productive settlement of the Tibet issue.<sup>49</sup>

Media and scholarly discourse also document the Chinese pressure on the international community to refrain from receiving the Dalai Lama as representative of the Tibetan community. This has put several countries in an awkward position and has necessitated much diplomatic maneuvering at Dalai Lama’s (non-state) visits to prevent antagonizing China.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, the miscalculations and alleged missteps on the part of the Dalai Lama and the CTA (while negotiating with the Chinese) have not gone unnoticed by scholars. Goldstein draws attention to several missed opportunities at rapprochement as well as diplomatic miscalculations on the part of the CTA.<sup>51</sup> He traces these instances back to 1989, when the Chinese invited the Dalai Lama to attend the Panchen Lama’s funeral in China, which the Dalai Lama refused. There were subsequent Chinese overtures towards the Dalai Lama that invited his participation in selecting the Panchen Lama’s incarnation (1991-95). The Dalai Lama failed to capitalize on either opportunity and instead chose to make a preemptive announcement

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<sup>47</sup> Barry Sautman, “‘Vegetarian between Meals’: The Dalai Lama, War, and Violence,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, no. 1 (2010): 90–93.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 92–97; Klein, “An Analysis of China’s Human Rights Policies in Tibet,” 118.

<sup>49</sup> Sautman, “‘Vegetarian between Meals,’” 91.

<sup>50</sup> “Obama Walks Tightrope With Dalai Lama Meeting,” *The Diplomat*, accessed May 19, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/02/obama-walks-tightrope-with-dalai-lama-meeting/>; “China Approves of Norwegian Leaders Not Meeting Dalai Lama,” *Reuters*, April 28, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/28/us-china-norway-idUSBREA3R0L320140428>; Kaiman, “China Denounces Barack Obama’s Meeting with Dalai Lama”; Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 228; Philip Wen Beijing, “Rebuke at Dalai Lama Meeting,” *Sunday Age, The (Melbourne)*, February 23, 2014, 10.

<sup>51</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 68–72.

regarding the commonly chosen candidate. This created an embarrassing diplomatic situation for the Chinese and led to a loss of faith in the Dalai Lama's intentions for rapprochement. Goldstein argues that these missed opportunities perpetuated the trust deficit between both sides and contributed to the subsequent suspension in negotiations.<sup>52</sup> Continuing this line of analysis can shed light on the vulnerability of the Tibetan movement, given the significant cult of personality around the Dalai Lama during the past six decades of the movement's existence.

### Why Tibet Matters

There is virtually universal scholarly acknowledgement of the long held strategic importance of Tibet with Thierry Mathou referring to it as a bridge between China and South Asia.<sup>53</sup> The British in the days of *The Great Game* wanted nothing more than to establish Tibet as a buffer state to protect its Indian dominion.<sup>54</sup> Norbu claims after Indian independence China perceived Tibet as its vulnerable backdoor and securing it became one of its core priorities.<sup>55</sup> He also acknowledges how Tibet was seen as the Himalayan boundary that acted as a primary barrier to the territory of India.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, he argues Tibet's strategic importance to override any historical or ideological claim.<sup>57</sup>

Mathou on the other hand, lists more pragmatic factors such as Tibet's relatively unexploited mining potential with significant reserves of chromite deposits, gold, lithium, copper, molybdenum, cobalt, tungsten, platinum, nickel, silver, and iron. In addition, the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) possesses magnetite, used in the metallurgical industry, barite for the chemical industry as well as gypsum and muscovite which are crucial for building and defense equipment.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 90; *ibid*, 103–106.

<sup>53</sup> Thierry Mathou, "Tibet and Its Neighbors: Moving toward a New Chinese Strategy in the Himalayan Region," *Asian Survey*, no. 4 (2005): 518, doi:10.1525/as.2005.45.4.503.

<sup>54</sup> Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 349.

<sup>55</sup> Dawa Norbu, "Chinese Strategic Thinking on Tibet and the Himalayan Region," *Strategic Analysis* 32, no. 4 (July 2008): 374–375.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 371–372.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 374–375.

<sup>58</sup> Mathou, "Tibet and Its Neighbors," 507–508.

Mathou also brings attention to the fact that the Tibetan plateau is home to the major watershed in Asia. It is the upper riparian not only to Han China but India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand over 10 important rivers. China has planned and executed several ambitious hydroelectricity projects that are vital for its booming economy and therefore keeping Tibet firmly in its control is crucial.<sup>59</sup>

Although the presence of Tibet's natural resources is not a secret, this factor has not been directly analyzed as one that explains Chinese reluctance to the MWA. Therefore, there exists potential for such an analysis while considering geopolitics in addition to other factors such as economic and ideological state interests.

### **Implications on Regional Security and Prestige**

This survey reveals limited consideration regarding the pertinence of the Tibet issue for the regional insecurity landscape. Taking the larger picture into account; it can be claimed that if China concedes genuine autonomy to Tibet, there are potentially far-reaching implications on its relationship with countries with whom it remains engaged in contentious territorial and maritime disputes; namely; India, Vietnam, South Korea and even Japan.<sup>60</sup> If such a policy shift were to occur, China's currently aggressive foreign policy and diplomatic style could potentially lose its edge in the regional neighborhood of East and South Asia.

This dimension has been examined to a limited extent with the bulk of the analysis devoted to possible implications of Tibetan autonomy for the separatist movement in Xinjiang; on the border disputes of India and in a minor way for the reunification of Taiwan with China. Topgyal, Jacobsen and Suisheng Zhao have each dealt with one or two of the above factors but there is still a lack of condensed work that analyzes all these factors in relation to one another.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 509–510.

<sup>60</sup> Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Foreign Policy as a Rising Power to Find Its Rightful Place," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 103–107; Huang, "The Tibet Issue: An Impasse or Entrapment?," 24.

<sup>61</sup> Suisheng Zhao, "The Implication of Demilitarization of Tibet for Sino-Indian Relations and Asian Security," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 22, no. 4 (January 1996): 254; Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Foreign Policy as a

Few scholars have proposed reverse or cyclical causation that traces how regional factors such as; the resistances to a ‘rising China’, its aggressive foreign policy and how the regional disputes trace back to specifically to the MWA.

Another implication that has been only marginally acknowledged is the claim that if China grants autonomy to Tibet, that will lend legitimacy to Tibetan “stateness” and thereby label China as imperialist in its ambitions; a tag the PRC cannot afford to bear as a communist country.<sup>62</sup> From the other perspective, giving in to the Chinese demand of recognizing Tibet as an inalienable part of China will concede the legitimate basis for the Tibetan side of the negotiation.

### **The Role Played by the Great Powers and India**

Due attention has been paid by scholars (such as Goldstein, Norbu, Sautman, Dipak Basu & Victoria Marushnik, David M. Crowe, Tej Pratap Singh and Wang Lixiong) to the historical and continuing role played by external powers such as Britain, India and the US and their effect on the trajectory of the dispute.<sup>63</sup> Terms like “bad friendship syndrome” and dual standards have been used to describe the motivations and policy actions of these powers.<sup>64</sup> Ellen Bork quotes correspondence between the British Ambassador at the time of Tibet’s appeal to the United Nations when he said, “What we want to do, is to create a situation which does not oblige us in practice to do anything”.<sup>65</sup> The current fence sitting role of these external powers whilst expressing sympathy for the Tibetan cause in non-binding though highly public overtures has been mostly overlooked in the free press and this has led to popularly held assumptions of

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Rising Power to Find Its Rightful Place”; Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute”; Jacobsen, “The Tibet-China Question Under Investigation.”

<sup>62</sup> Sirki, “The Tibet Factor in India-China Relations,” 60.

<sup>63</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 22–32; *ibid.*, 7677; *ibid.*, 91; Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 296–297; *ibid.*, 263–282; Dipak Basu and Victoria Miroshnik, “China-India Border Dispute and Tibet,” *東南アジア研究年報* 53 (2012): 43–51; David M. Crowe, “The ‘Tibet Question’: Tibetan, Chinese and Western Perspectives,” *Nationalities Papers* 41, no. 6 (November 2013): 1100–1135, doi:10.1080/00905992.2013.801946; Tej Pratap Singh, “Tibet Factor in Sino-India Relations,” 1–2, accessed March 6, 2014, [http://www.academia.edu/1531341/Tibet\\_Factor\\_in\\_Sino-India\\_Relations](http://www.academia.edu/1531341/Tibet_Factor_in_Sino-India_Relations); Goldstein, *Tibet, China and the United States*, 1–3; Lixiong, “A True ‘Middle-Way’ Solution to Tibetan Unrest,” 31.

<sup>64</sup> Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 294–295; Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Ellen Bork, “Tibet’s Transition,” *World Affairs* 175, no. 3 (October 9, 2012): 41.

US policy support among the populous in Tibet as well as people in the rest of the world.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Chinese policy discourse vilifies Western attempts at encouraging dialogue as meddling in domestic Chinese affairs and claims the Dalai Lama is a pawn in the West's anti-China campaign.<sup>67</sup> The most recent support from President Obama reflects the continuation of the use of the Tibet card to keep Chinese influence in check from time to time.<sup>68</sup>

### **Parallels with the Cases of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Xinjiang, and Mongolia**

While assessing the prospects for the granting of Hong Kong's level of autonomy in Tibet; practical considerations such as comparative geographical size, population and economic backwardness of Tibet when compared to Hong Kong have been argued by Lina Kutkauskaitė as being the main stumbling blocks to arrive at a similar arrangement. She emphasizes on the role played by the United Kingdom to bring about such an accommodation while negotiating the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC.<sup>69</sup> She, along with scholars such as Topgyal draw comparisons between the cases of the Uighurs, the Inner Mongols with the Tibetans, with Topgyal arguing that these non-Chinese present "socio-political challenges to China's self-identification as a modern unitary nation-state".<sup>70</sup>

Goldstein has contrasted the case of Tibet with Mongolia observing how, at the fall of the Qing dynasty, despite political similarities, Mongolia eventually graduated to nationhood and Tibet remains mired in the current impasse.<sup>71</sup> He argues this to be due to the role played by the Soviet Union in supporting Mongolian claim to independence after War II. This support was in contrast to the Western validation of Chinese claims on Tibet (notwithstanding the latter's lofty rhetoric about self determination and freedom).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 122–123.

<sup>67</sup> "So-Called 'Tibet Independence' Was Part of Imperialist Aggressors' Attempt to Carve up China.," accessed May 19, 2014, [http://english.gov.cn/official/2011-07/11/content\\_1904075\\_2.htm](http://english.gov.cn/official/2011-07/11/content_1904075_2.htm).

<sup>68</sup> "Obama Throws Support behind Dalai Lama, Tibet Rights."

<sup>69</sup> Kutkauskaitė, "Chinese State Policies Towards Tibet and Xinjiang," 46.

<sup>70</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 29–25; Kutkauskaitė, "Chinese State Policies Towards Tibet and Xinjiang," 47.

<sup>71</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 40.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Norbu, while comparing the Tibetan cause to the Taiwanese issue, compares the Kuomintang's (KMT) 1934 proposal for Tibetan autonomy with the PRC's 17-point agreement and argues the absence of a "hidden agenda" in the language of the two texts.<sup>73</sup> With regards to the present, he cites the more visible restraining influence of the US and Japan (however dual) and the Chinese emphasis on "reunification" rather than "liberation".<sup>74</sup> He goes on to point to the vast economic differences between the Tibet of 1950 and the Taiwan of today.<sup>75</sup> He does however cite commonalities and adds the claim that the PRC are using the "Tibetan model" to tailor its policy guidelines towards Taiwan.<sup>76</sup>

### The Middle Way Approach

Scholars such as Wang Lixiong have assessed the MWA being either far too impractical a proposal while others such as Baogang He & Sautman analyze its prospects to be bleak considering China's growing economic clout in the world order; the changing agendas of world leaders, the Dalai Lama's ascending years and therefore; time being on the side of the Chinese.<sup>77</sup> White papers issued by the PRC and the coverage by the Chinese press agency *Xinhua*, showcase allegations that the MWA seeks to "shake the systemic foundations of Tibetan development"<sup>78</sup> and clearly voices its opposition to the proposals for "high autonomy" for Tibet.<sup>79</sup>

However, what seems to be lacking is an in depth, objective analysis with theoretical explanations of the Chinese position and an incisive explanation of why it continues to have a rigid Tibet policy despite the many seeming benefits of resolving the Tibet crisis once and for all.

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<sup>73</sup> Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 104–106.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 299–300.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 301.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 311.

<sup>77</sup> Baogang He and Barry Sautman, "The Politics of the Dalai Lama's New Initiative for Autonomy," *Pacific Affairs* 78, no. 4 (December 1, 2005): 603–607; Lixiong, "A True 'Middle-Way' Solution to Tibetan Unrest," 32–34.

<sup>78</sup> Hou Qiang, "Full Text: Development and Progress of Tibet - Xinhua | English.news.cn," *Concluding Remarks*, accessed June 2, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c\\_132819442\\_8.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c_132819442_8.htm).

<sup>79</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn."

## Focus on Nationalism, Human Rights issues and Tibetan Uprisings

Goldstein is one of the few scholars who dismisses the importance of human rights and argues the Tibetan issue to be a purely a nationalist conflict and as typical of nationalist conflicts, rife with “emotional and disingenuous” political rhetoric that clouds the real issue itself.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, Norbu argues Han nationalism to be a driver of the One-China policy and therefore to the lack of Chinese consideration for any genuine autonomy or a federation-like arrangement for Tibet or Taiwan.<sup>81</sup>

Other discourse both from the press and scholarly world has highlighted the human rights perspectives of the Tibet issue with Chatterly Chaim taking on the theme of cultural genocide; Bork highlighting Tibetan self-immolations and Klein bringing attention to suppression of basic freedoms of expression in Tibet.<sup>82</sup> These and other accounts largely project the Tibetan uprisings in sympathetic tones and portray the actions of the agents of these uprisings as being heroic reactions to suppression.<sup>83</sup>

## Solutions

The words “compromise” and “dialogue” feature prominently in recommendations towards achieving a solution. Both Goldstein and Lixiong propose compromises that they claim have the potential to satisfy CTA’s agenda for autonomy and Chinese ideals of sovereignty.<sup>84</sup> Lixiong suggests what he calls “progressive democracy,” a system based on elections starting at the village level. Goldstein recommends that the CTA “lowers its bottom line” to facilitate a compromise.<sup>85</sup> The overall emphasis is on bridging the trust deficit through gradual initiatives as

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<sup>80</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, x.

<sup>81</sup> Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 335–336.

<sup>82</sup> Chatterley Chaim, “Cultural Genocide in Tibet? A Look at China’s Linguistic Policies and Possible Breaches on International Law,” *Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights & the Law* 11, no. 1 (January 2010): 39–55, doi:10.1163/138819010X12647506166834; Bork, “Tibet’s Transition”; Klein, “An Analysis of China’s Human Rights Policies in Tibet”; Tsering Woeser, “Tibet’s Enduring Defiance,” *The New York Times*, March 2, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/03/opinion/international/tibets-enduring-defiance.html>; Crowe, “The ‘Tibet Question,’” 1123–1125.

<sup>83</sup> Woeser, “Tibet’s Enduring Defiance”; “Exile Tibetan Leader Testifies before Italian Senate Body,” *Tibetan Review: The Monthly Magazine on All Aspects of Tibet* 68, no. 11/12 (December 11, 2013): 14–15.

<sup>84</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 125; Lixiong, “A True ‘Middle-Way’ Solution to Tibetan Unrest,” 33–34.

<sup>85</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 125.

suggested by experts such as He and Sautman, who advocate for education initiatives that can counter Han chauvinism in China; the establishment of a political space where dialogue can take place as well as the instatement of a Tibetan party secretary in TAR.<sup>86</sup> Huang Jing advocates for a similar solution and urges both sides to institutionalize dialogue and put an end to propaganda that demonizes either side.<sup>87</sup>

### Theoretical Analyses

The survey of literature makes it possible to concur with Topgyal's argument regarding the largely limited use of IR theories to explain the intractability of the Tibet issue. Topgyal has supposed this to be due to the innate state centrism of IR theory.<sup>88</sup> This is plausible, given the questionable status of Tibet's as a state. This limited use is illustrated in the significant portion of the literature seemingly built on Goldstein's use of traditional *Realpolitik* frameworks to depict the Sino-Tibetan conflict.<sup>89</sup> The literature has largely overlooked the cause and effect relationship shared between clashing perceptions of identity with various geopolitical state interests. Kutkauskaitė, as if to counter this, uses a framework based on a modification of Milton J. Esman's theory of ethnic mobilization to explain how selected factors influence China's policies towards the three regions of Hong Kong, Tibet and Xinjiang. Though useful, this approach labels China as a threat-vanquishing aggressor without explaining the root cause of its own threat perception.<sup>90</sup> Topgyal, seemingly filling this gap has developed and used a framework of "insecurity dilemma" (under the condition of anarchy) to argue that a feedback mechanism exists between the various security dilemmas implicit in the case of Chinese state and the Tibetan

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<sup>86</sup> He and Sautman, "The Politics of the Dalai Lama's New Initiative for Autonomy," 620–625.

<sup>87</sup> Huang, "The Tibet Issue: An Impasse or Entrapment?," 30–31.

<sup>88</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 5.

<sup>89</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, x; "Tibet's Dalai Lama; "Tibet's Dalai Lama; Realpolitik from the Prince of Shangrila," *Christian Science Monitor*, accessed May 15, 2014, [http://www.csmonitor.com/1981/0820/082060.html/\(page\)/](http://www.csmonitor.com/1981/0820/082060.html/(page)/); Pranay Kotasthane, "Tryst with Realpolitik," *Business Standard India*, May 15, 2014, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/specials/tryst-with-realpolitik-114051500982\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/specials/tryst-with-realpolitik-114051500982_1.html).

<sup>90</sup> Kutkauskaitė, "Chinese State Policies Towards Tibet and Xinjiang," 46–49.

nation.<sup>91</sup> Jacobsen has made a recent foray into using IR theory of social constructivism to explain the differing perceptions of the conflict in the various camps. This goes some way toward bridging the gap of IR theory based research on Tibet as cited by Topgyal.<sup>92</sup>

This survey has broadly examined the scholarship on the Sino-Tibetan issue and has observed and noted the lack of theoretical application that successfully ties together the persistent issues of historical divergences, nationalism & identity conflicts, clashing and converging geopolitical interests (of parties not limited to China and the CTA) that manifest in the dialogues and behavior of both parties. This thesis, through the subsequently explained theoretical lens seeks to remedy these exposed gaps in scholarship. However, it keeps its primary focus on China's state behavior since it is the party that bears the primary burden of response.

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<sup>91</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 2.

<sup>92</sup> Jacobsen, "The Tibet-China Question Under Investigation," 7-10.

## Chapter 4-The Theoretical Lens

As with any research endeavor that seeks to find reasons, patterns and explanations as to why certain events transpire (or do not transpire) in the domain of international relations, it is imperative that we also search for theoretical paradigms that explain the behavior of agents in the international state system. The previous survey of the literature has revealed that scholars have largely abstained from using IR theories to explain the intractability of the Tibet issue due to their innate state centrism and the fact that Tibet's status as a state is the very question itself. However, this is a liberty that this thesis dares to take because firstly; by not doing so, valuable insights gained from theoretical analysis would be overlooked and secondly using IR theories can help us establish whether the Tibetan Government-in-exile is indeed behaving like a *de facto/de jure* rational state or whether there are other variables at play. This holds a possible key not only for findings regarding the *de facto* vs. *de jure* status of the CTA but also regarding other such governments-in-exile in other parts of the world. Such an analysis is crucial to factor in while investigating the PRC's basis of reluctance to consider Tibet as potentially autonomous quasi-state under the MWA.

To this end, this thesis shares its premise with Stephen M. Walt who believes that IR studies are best undertaken keeping in mind the implicit interaction between the realist, liberal, and other traditions in world affairs.<sup>93</sup> Consequently, it is plausible to agree with his approach of utilizing diverse schools of thought (as lenses) rather than limit our studies to the framework of any single, rigid theory.<sup>94</sup> This allows for a deeper understanding of the intricacies of contemporary world politics and in the case of this work, a deeper analysis of China's state behavior.

### 4.1 The Framework

Proponents of constructivism and neo-realism continue to engage in lively debate over their conflicting beliefs regarding structure (anarchy and power distribution in the state system)

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<sup>93</sup> Stephen M. Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," *Foreign Policy*, 1998, 1.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, 1-2.

and whether it is purely materialist or comprises both of material capabilities and social relationships. Mearsheimer and Alexander Wendt are two such prominent scholars that have engaged in similar debates.<sup>95</sup> However, with some degree of pragmatism, while disagreeing with Mearsheimer on the lack of inclusivity with how the latter defines structure, Wendt acknowledges the shared possession of all five of Mearsheimer's so-called realist assumptions.<sup>96</sup> In his piece titled *Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, Wendt provides a theoretical bridge between the two neo-realist and constructivist traditions with the central claim:<sup>97</sup>

...self-help and power politics do not follow either logically or causally from anarchy and that if today we find ourselves in a self-help world, this is due to process, not structure. There is no 'logic' of anarchy apart from the practices that create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process. Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. *Anarchy is what states make of it.*

This thesis, for its analysis, will utilize this bridge while keeping in mind the five mutually shared assumptions originally proposed by Mearsheimer. This framework will explain China's perceptions of Tibet as a product of its interpretation *of* and interaction *with* the idea of Tibet. It will prove Chinese state behavior towards the MWA as subject to this process of interaction and learning and therefore in accordance with how it identifies itself in terms with Tibet. Through this, I argue China's actions to be in line with the tenets of this combinatorial approach that uses realist assumption of anarchy with Wendt's constructivist-liberal emphasis on ideas, interactions and institutions. It is important to consider that both theories (neo-realism and constructivism)

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<sup>95</sup> Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It"; Wendt, "Constructing International Politics."

<sup>96</sup> Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," 72; Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 392–395; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 30–33.

<sup>97</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 394–395.

are state centric, and while this poses no significant for utilization in the context of China, US and others; a certain amount of analytical leeway has been taken while considering Tibet, given the nature of the thesis and the long enduring conflict about the same issue.

In order to proceed, it is vital to briefly re-examine Mearsheimer's and Wendt's shared assumptions. Following this I will illustrate Wendt's argument regarding how the nature of state systems and their politics are socially constructed and aided by transformations of state identity and interests under conditions of anarchy.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4.1.1 The Assumptions

Mearsheimer's first assumption about the international system is that it is anarchic. Anarchy here essentially refers to the lack of a higher central authority that 'governs' the governments.<sup>99</sup> He also assumes that great powers possess offensive military capacity and therefore are potentially dangerous to each other.<sup>100</sup> The third assumption claims that states can never be certain that another state's offensive military capacity will not be used against it.<sup>101</sup> The fourth assumption is predicated on the notion that survival is the primary aim of great powers. Survival entails safeguarding of territorial integrity, political autonomy and domestic order. Mearsheimer's final assumption is based on the presumed rationality of the great powers themselves and that they are capable of strategizing their survival according to the external environment and other states that surround them.<sup>102</sup>

Mearsheimer claims that when these five assumptions operate together, they manifest themselves in states behaving in an offensive manner with regard to each other. He observes three patterns of state behavior; fear, self-help, and power maximization.<sup>103</sup> This premise is where Mearsheimer and Wendt essentially diverge with the latter's assertion that self- help conceptions

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 395.

<sup>99</sup> Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 30.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 30–31.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 32.

of security are not constitutive of anarchy but are subject to processes of state interaction where the role of anarchy is merely permissive.<sup>104</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Alexander Wendt's Contribution

According to constructivist logic, state interests are influenced by their identities.<sup>105</sup> Wendt argues that state identities themselves are subject to the process of interaction and learning and the way in which the self is identified cognitively with the other.<sup>106</sup> Wendt advances a pattern of interaction between states while keeping the constructivist assumption that threats are socially constructed (see figure 1). He calls this pattern, “*The codetermination of institutions and process*”.<sup>107</sup>

This pattern (in Figure 1) is claimed by Wendt to explain the formation of a self-help security system which develops from the manner in which the involved states perceive each other and how threatening they perceive other states to their ‘self’.<sup>108</sup> He explains that through continued reinforcement, reciprocal interactions between states create “relatively stable concepts of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ regarding the issue at stake in the interaction”.<sup>109</sup> Dependent on these reciprocal interactions, he claims that states go on to develop trust equations or trust deficits (what he calls intersubjective understandings). If states perceive the other as threatening, they “mirror” their behavior in proportion to the threat perceived and how they originally viewed the threatening state. Wendt argues such interaction to lead to security dilemmas between states.<sup>110</sup> He clarifies that the identity and interests constituent in these dilemmas are themselves ongoing components as well as products of the interaction within the specific scenario. He goes on to say that “If states find themselves in a self-help system, this is because their practices made it that

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<sup>104</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It,” 396.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 398.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 399.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 406.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 405–407.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 405.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 406.

way”. He argues the applicability of his model for competitive and cooperative systems alike.<sup>111</sup> With regards to such systems, Wendt claims that aggressive behavior of predatory states forces other states to retaliate with competitive power politics.<sup>112</sup> He argues that a single predator can out maneuver a multitude of pacifists due to the lack of guarantees under conditions of anarchy. He stipulates that in such a scenario with two entities; if one is predatory, the other must either retaliate in self-help terms or capitulate. In an anarchical scenario of many, Wendt claims the predatory effect is predicated on the extent of collective security present in the system.<sup>113</sup>

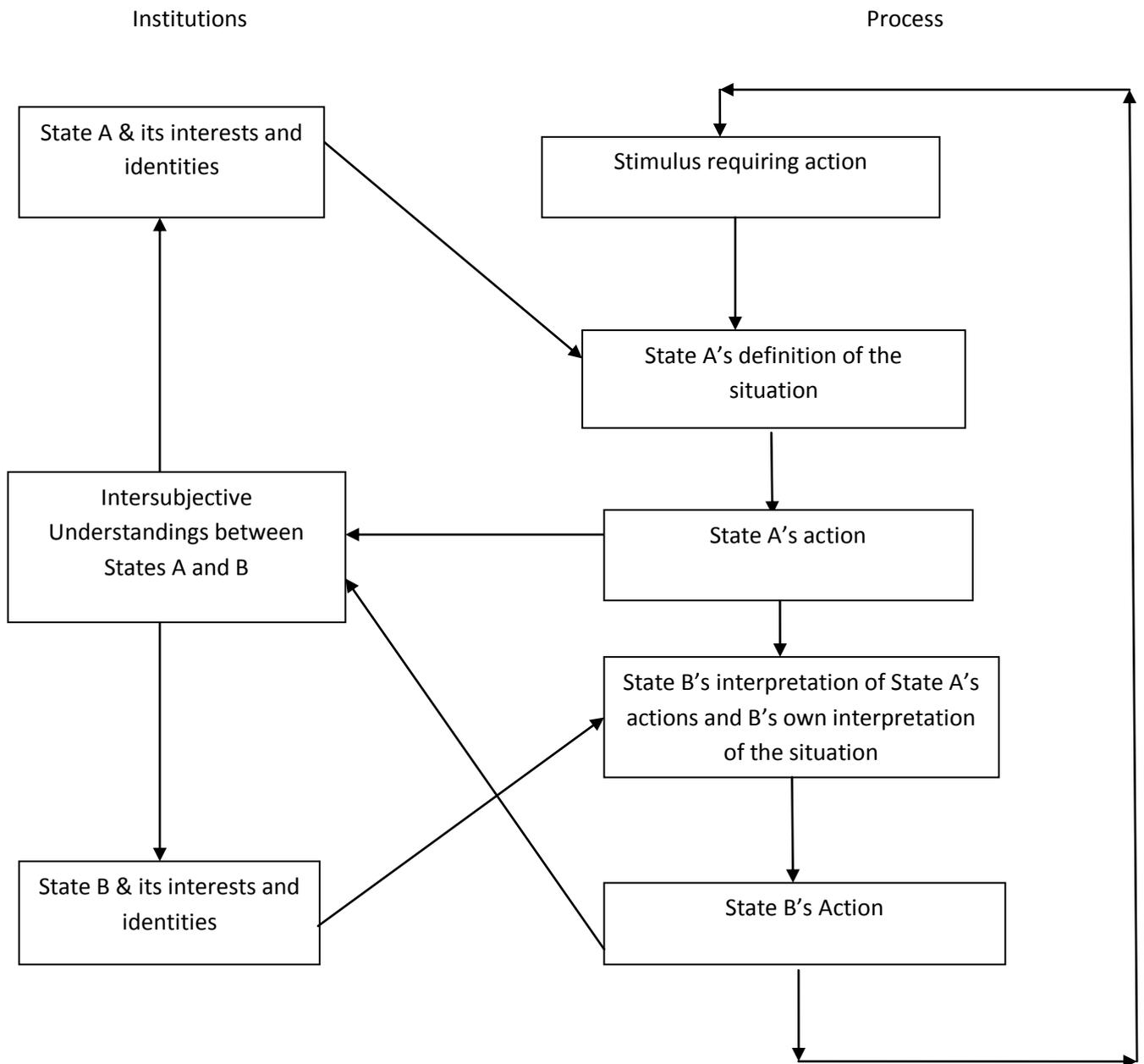
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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 407.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 408.

Figure 1: Wendt's Cyclical Pattern of Interaction  
 (Sourced from *Anarchy is What States Make of It*, page 406)



Using this pattern as the backbone of analysis, Wendt treats state interest and identity as two separate dependent variables under the condition of anarchy in a self help world. For the sake of clarity, figure 2 has been constructed to showcase Wendt’s framework. His framework presents three institutional transformations where identity and/or interests (DV<sub>1</sub> and DV<sub>2</sub>) are transformed; by the practice of sovereignty (IV<sub>1</sub>); by evolution of cooperation (IV<sub>2</sub>) and by the intentional efforts of transformation (IV<sub>3</sub>).<sup>114</sup>

Figure 2: Wendt’s Variables



### 1) *Practice of Sovereignty*

Wendt acknowledges that sovereignty provides the social basis for the individuality and security of states exists solely due to mutual recognition among states. This constructs the sovereign state but also instates a “community” which recognizes each other’s right to enforce unitary political authority over a given territory.<sup>115</sup> Wendt goes on to claim that if states ceased to recognize each other as such, their identity as “sovereigns” would also cease to exist. Whichever is the manner in how actors and states treat each other, he claims that over time this model of behavior is institutionalized.<sup>116</sup> He argues that issues of identity and interest would arise in the case of two conditions;<sup>117</sup>

- (a) High frequency and proximity of interactions.
- (b) Actors must be discontented with the previous modes of identity and interaction.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 412–418.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 412.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 413.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 414.

Commenting on the effect of sovereignty, he claims sovereignty norms effect understandings of security and power politics in mainly three ways. First that states will equate their security with preservice of their “property rights” over specific territories; however he acknowledges that in some cases that some states would probably be more “secure” if they give up claims on certain territories. Secondly, he claims that upon absorption of sovereignty norms, states act mindful towards the territorial rights of others.<sup>118</sup> Lastly, depending on the level of recognition afforded to states by others, Wendt claims that states can rely on the “international community” to protect their security.<sup>119</sup>

## ***2) Unintentional Transformations through Cooperation***

With regards to roles and identities, Wendt claims institutionalizing cooperation involves accepting and acquiring new role identities. He holds that the process through which egoist entities learn to cooperate simultaneously enables them to reform their interests into shared commitments. These commitments, he claims prove fairly stable as they are now interwoven with the entities’ identities and interests.<sup>120</sup> However, he holds such transformation to be predicated on mutual positive identification of actors/states and on the absence of institutional or structural change as an intentional effect of the joint activity. Even so, with the passage of time, Wendt argues the process of cooperation and its implicit commitments has the ability to transform positive interdependences of outcomes between states into matters of collective interest.<sup>121</sup>

## ***3) Self Conscious Efforts to Transform***

Wendt realizes that negative identification and trust deficits pose obstacles towards accepting vulnerabilities that come along with cooperation.<sup>122</sup> He also acknowledges that any role performance is subject to the choice of the actor. This allows the actor to reinvent and redefine

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 415.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 417.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 418-419.

its interest and identities according to the situation.<sup>123</sup> According to Wendt, voluntary changes of identity and interests necessitate some preconditions. Firstly, there must be a reason that justifies the new perception of self. He believes this can be due to emerging social situations that cannot coexist with earlier self-conceptions. Secondly, he argues that the expected costs of the voluntary reinvention cannot exceed its gains. Under such conditions, Wendt argues that actors can self reflect to initiate processes to transform their identities and interests and therefore, alter the paradigm in which they are embedded.<sup>124</sup> He elaborates that in such cases of self reflection and subsequent identity changes, three steps generally proceed; the breakdown of a consensus regarding identity; a critical examination of old ideas about the ‘self’, the other and the existing structures of interactions therein and finally; “altercasting,” or “stage managing”, where a state acts in accordance with its newly acquired identity and represents itself in terms of the role it wants to play.<sup>125</sup>

With the framework for analysis set, the next chapter examines diverging histories, Chinese policy action and dialogue between China and the CTA. This will expose the variables that the above framework will use for analysis.

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 419.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 420–421.

## Chapter 5- Divergent Histories and their Reflections in Chinese Policy and Dialogue

The highly contested history of the connection between China and Tibet reflects in the differing version of events attested to by the PRC and the Tibetan government-in-exile (CTA).<sup>126</sup> China claims that it has ruled Tibet for more than seven centuries (some accounts claim Chinese sovereignty since the Yuan dynasty in the 13<sup>th</sup> century) and goes on to insist Tibet to have never been an independent state in its relevant history.<sup>127</sup> The CTA disputes this version by questioning the Chinese identity and antecedents of the Mongols and Manchus (the dynasties that the Chinese base their version on) and argues that relations between the Tibetan Lamas and the Mongol and Manchu emperors were akin to those between a “priest and a patron”, and as such did not entail political subordination of Tibet.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, the CTA claims Tibet to have been an independent state at the time of the Chinese invasion in 1949.<sup>129</sup> These different attestations to a mutual history have significant bearing on contemporary affairs as they continue to be intertwined with the current impasse, its inherent agendas, negotiations and policy behavior.<sup>130</sup> The remainder of this chapter examines how these specific accounts and divergent histories manifest themselves in Chinese policy behavior with regards to territories and ethnic minorities that it claims are an integral part of China and belong to its larger Chinese state identity.

### 5.1 The Point of Diversion

The varying version of events appears to have been especially influenced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries by the British, who during the so-called Great Game, tried to establish Tibet as a buffer state with the motive of safeguarding its Indian dominion from Russia. In order to do so, British scholars such as Satow rationalized the Sino-Tibetan equation into Western

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<sup>126</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute,” 79.

<sup>127</sup> “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *Tibet -- Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation*, accessed April 15, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/>.

<sup>128</sup> “Strasbourg Proposal 1988 | The Office of His Holiness The Dalai Lama,” accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/strasbourg-proposal-1988>

<sup>129</sup> “Issues Facing Tibet Today - Central Tibetan Administration,” accessed May 2, 2014, <http://tibet.net/about-tibet/issues-facing-tibet-today/>; Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*, 69.

<sup>130</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute,” 97; Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*.

political language.<sup>131</sup> Norbu claims the Sino-Tibetan arrangement to have been an exceptional system of indirect rule which gave the Tibetan Lamas a near-equal status to the Chinese emperor and as such, was not comparable to the equation shared with other Confucian dependencies.<sup>132</sup> The British attempt, however inaccurately, described the Sino-Tibetan equation being one of Chinese “suzerainty” but was this designed to achieve their aims of making Tibet a buffer state. While it served British interests, they tried to facilitate accords wherein Tibet would maintain a high level of autonomy while under Chinese suzerainty.<sup>133</sup> China, at this time, faced dire economic and political strife and though highly resistant to being a signatory to such memorandums, could not practically exercise (with effect) any significant control over Tibet or its leadership. Therefore, Tibet enjoyed a period of de-facto independence in the period between 1913 and 1949.<sup>134</sup>

### 5.1.1 The CTA’s Version of Events

The Dalai Lama’s personal account details how (in 1949) due to the existence of fragmented jurisdictions in Tibet,<sup>135</sup> Lhasa’s delayed attempts at damage control proved to be too little and quite late. According to him, the government<sup>136</sup> failed to; rally international support, conduct effective reform or make adequate defense preparations to prevent or repel the Chinese onslaught.<sup>137</sup> This is claimed to have resulted in a tremendously exposed weakness that led to Tibet’s speedy absorption into China in 1949-50.<sup>138</sup> The 15 year-old Dalai Lama was asked by overwhelmed Lhasa officials to assume full religious and political authority with an enthronement ceremony held shortly on 17 November, 1950.<sup>139</sup> The Dalai Lama claims his

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<sup>131</sup> Dawa Norbu, “Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations: The Centrality of Marginality,” *Asian Survey* 37, no. 11 (November 1997): 10–161, doi:10.2307/2645742.

<sup>132</sup> Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, 88–89.

<sup>133</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 32; Norbu, “Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations,” 170–173; Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 34–36.

<sup>134</sup> Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, 34.

<sup>135</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 97.

<sup>136</sup> As a non- member of the UN.

<sup>137</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 98.

<sup>138</sup> Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*, 62.

<sup>139</sup> Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 98.

government was demanded to send representatives to Beijing to negotiate the ‘peaceful liberation of Tibet,’ threatened otherwise by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) marching into Lhasa.<sup>140</sup> With the failure of its nascent defenses and a lack of foreign support from near and far, a delegation was sent to Beijing while the Dalai Lama took caution and temporarily left Lhasa for Southern Tibet, taking the state seals with him.<sup>141</sup> A significant claim by the Dalai Lama is that the 17-point Agreement was signed in his absence, without his consent and seal, between his plenipotentiary and the Chinese Central Government.<sup>142</sup> With the signing of; ‘*The Agreement of the Central People’s Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet*’, Tibet became a part of China.<sup>143</sup>

According to this account, the Dalai Lama and the *Kashag*<sup>144</sup> returned to Lhasa and grudgingly agreed to abide by the 17-point agreement and thus began a 10-year attempt at coexistence under its mandates.<sup>145</sup> However, there were constant clashes in everyday matters of governance between the Chinese and Tibetan local government.<sup>146</sup> The aggressive Chinese state building initiatives in Tibet were claimed to provoke a massive uprising in 1959 in Lhasa,<sup>147</sup> loss of faith in the 17-point agreement and the ultimate flight of the Dalai Lama to India where he discredited the agreement and cited it was signed under duress.<sup>148</sup>

### 5.1.2 China’s Version of Events

Sperling points out that Chinese republican era writers commonly considered Tibet to have become a vassal state of China during the Qing dynasty and subsequently proclaimed China and Tibet to be essentially linked and the Tibetans, a vital part of the Chinese nation.<sup>149</sup> He also

<sup>140</sup> Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*, 67.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 63–39; Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 98.

<sup>144</sup> Governing council of Tibet.

<sup>145</sup> Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*, 72.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 82–89; Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 127–128.

<sup>147</sup> Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*, 119; Topgyal, “Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino–Indian Border Dispute,” 127.

<sup>148</sup> Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*, 119–157.

<sup>149</sup> Sperling, “The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics,” 7–9.

observes that such proclamations were not backed up by much anthropological evidence and neither were they enforced during the *de facto* period of Tibetan independence. The birth of the PRC changed this status quo with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership no longer satisfied with vague historical notions of Tibetan submission.<sup>150</sup> The CCP became determined to assert its domination over Tibet and together with its nationalist-communist ideological imperative sought to specifically deal with a justified inclusion of Tibet.<sup>151</sup> This has formed the basis for an interpretation that has withstood till today; that Tibet became a part of China when the Mongol rulers of China united China and Tibet under their control. This affirmation has stayed fairly consistent, gaining a more nuanced and developed refinement as time has passed.<sup>152</sup> These refinements are visible in China's numerous white papers on Tibet with each elaborating on the historical integrity of its ownership of Tibet. The next section is devoted to such documentation, examining how China's version of events forms a basis for its state behavior towards Tibet.

## 5.2 China's Tibet Policy

China's policy towards Tibet (and therefore its state behavior) is represented by the official Chinese white papers available on PRC's mandated websites and also through press coverage provided by the Chinese government authorized agency *Xinhua*. Considering the huge volume of Chinese policy discourse available, this thesis will confine its sweep to the most recent Chinese white papers that deal with its "ownership" and development of Tibet; the PRC's views on the Dalai Lama; responses to the MWA; its National Minority Policy and finally the One-country Two Systems approach alongside the One-China Policy.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

### 5.2.1 China's White Papers on Ownership and Development of Tibet

The PRC's white papers are highly consistent regarding their claims on the ownership of Tibet as an integral part of what it calls the "motherland".<sup>153</sup> Their view rests on historical accounts that stand in contradiction with the more prominent versions published by the Dalai Lama and credibly cited scholars such as Norbu, Deepak and Goldstein.<sup>154</sup> These white papers claim Tibet to have been under Chinese sovereignty for 700 years and maintain that Tibet was never an independent state during that period. They also lay claim to long established centralized control over all matters of governance including the selection of the Dalai Lamas. The papers consistently claim that Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was unquestioned until the advent of the Western imperialist forces that reduced China to a shadow of its former self.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, the PRC claims the "peaceful liberation of Tibet" to have been the most epic turning points in its history which opened a path to unprecedented development and prosperity for the Tibetan people who, previous to 1951, were victims of feudal serfdom and theocracy.<sup>156</sup>

The PRC's view claims that the "peaceful liberation" enjoyed popular support amongst Buddhist clergy and Tibetan laymen, and since then Tibet has enjoyed accelerated levels of development and democratization through the attempts of the Chinese Central Government. With regards to Tibetan independence, the PRC claims it to be "cooked up by old and new imperialists out of their crave to wrest Tibet from China". They also bring attention to the fact that no foreign country recognizes Tibet as an independent state.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *Tibet -- Its Ownership And Human Rights Situation*, accessed April 15, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/>; "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *The Dalai Clique's Separatist Activities and the Central Government's Policy*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-3.htm>.

<sup>154</sup> Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, *Freedom in Exile*; Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*; Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*.

<sup>155</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *Origins of So-Called "Tibetan Independence,"* accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-2.htm>; "So-Called 'Tibet Independence' Was Part of Imperialist Aggressors' Attempt to Carve up China."

<sup>156</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *Feudal Serfdom in Old Tibet*, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-4.htm>; Hou Qiang, "Full Text: Development and Progress of Tibet - Xinhua | English.news.cn," *The Development and Progress in Tibet Is the Inevitable Result of History*, accessed June 1, 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c\\_132819442\\_2.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/22/c_132819442_2.htm).

<sup>157</sup> "Full Text: Sixty Years Since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet," *Sixty Years Since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet Preface*, accessed June 2, 2014, [http://english.gov.cn/official/2011-07/11/content\\_1904075.htm](http://english.gov.cn/official/2011-07/11/content_1904075.htm).

### 5.2.2 The PRC's views on the Dalai Lama and Responses to the MWA

The Chinese view the Dalai Lama and what they call his “clique” as divisive separatists who have fabricated numerous lies to sow dissension and incite the Tibetan people to oppose the Central Government. He is claimed to no longer be a religious leader but a political leader who is an instrument of imperialist forces that support separatism in China. The PRC white papers claim to be open and willing for dialogue and urge the Dalai Lama to return to the motherland as a Chinese patriot and contribute to the unification and the happiness of the Tibetan people.<sup>158</sup>

With regard to the MWA, the white papers claim any concepts of “Greater Tibet” and “a high degree of autonomy” to be unconstitutional, unlawful and capable of rocking the systemic foundations that have brought about progress and development in Tibet.<sup>159</sup> To this effect, the government declared “China's sovereignty over Tibet brooks no denial. Of Tibet there could be no independence, nor semi-independence, nor independence in disguise”.<sup>160</sup>

### 5.2.3 China's National Minority Policy

Under the Constitution of the PRC, citizens of all ethnic minorities are provided for with the rights to public franchise, religious beliefs, education, the use and development of languages and freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration. They are constitutionally able to criticize and make suggestions regarding any state organ or functionary; and have the freedom to preserve or change their own folkways and customs. The Chinese government claims that as a result of specially adopted policies and measures, a favorable social environment has been created for all ethnic groups.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *The Dalai Clique's Separatist Activities and the Central Government's Policy*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-3.htm>.

<sup>159</sup> “White Paper on Tibetan Culture,” *Conclusion*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/features/tibetpaper/tibeta.html>.

<sup>160</sup> “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *The Dalai Clique's Separatist Activities and the Central Government's Policy*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-3.htm>.

<sup>161</sup> “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *Adherence to Equality and Unity Among Ethnic Groups*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/4/4.2.htm>.

Among the country's 55 ethnic minorities, 44 have their own "autonomous" areas where the system of regional autonomy is claimed to be established. The Chinese claim this system allows ethnic minorities to exercise autonomy as "masters of their homelands" while upholding and working towards the unity of the Chinese state. However, it is clarified that regional autonomy is under the ownership of the state and therefore subordinate to the Central Government.<sup>162</sup> The People's Government of Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) is claimed to have made great progress at achieving social and economic development in Tibet. It is claimed that both levels of administration have worked at preserving and promoting traditional Tibetan culture in line with the PRC's constitutional provisions.<sup>163</sup>

Tibetan culture is claimed to have been transformed with social progress and development. "Decadent and backward" elements are claimed to have been discarded, yet Tibetans are held to be protected in their traditions of prayer. The PRC policy emphasizes on the simultaneous progress achieved in the fields of modern and technological education and media.<sup>164</sup>

#### 5.2.4 One Country Two Systems Policy under One China Policy

The applicability of these policies on the case of Tibet can be extrapolated from the PRC's position on its policies with regards to Taiwan, which is based on its successful testing in the case of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).<sup>165</sup> The PRC emphasizes the existence of a single China and stands firmly against actions "designed to split China's sovereignty and territorial integrity". It therefore, stands against any overtures that are aimed at "independence". The inalienability of its territories renders attempts at achieving "self-

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<sup>162</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/4/4.3.htm>.

<sup>163</sup> "White Paper on Tibetan Culture," *Foreword*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/features/tibetpaper/tibeta.html>.

<sup>164</sup> "White Paper on Tibetan Culture."

<sup>165</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *The Chinese Government's Basic Position Regarding Settlement of the Taiwan Question*, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/taiwan/10-4.htm>; "White Paper--The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue," *White Paper--The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/twwt/White%20Papers/t36705.htm>.

determination” out of the question. Under this policy and on the premise of “One China”, socialism and capitalism are believed possible to coexist and develop. However, it is important to consider that this concept of “Two Systems” has been devised specifically based on Taiwanese situation, its economic and social realities as they exist and the practical interests that they represent for the PRC.<sup>166</sup>

In the event of unification, provisions claim to maintain Taiwan's current socio-economic system and ensure that ownership of private property, businesses and inheritances will not be affected negatively. Furthermore, this policy provides for Taiwan (as in the case of Hong Kong) to become a special administrative region. It will be imparted a “high” degree of autonomy and as such, will be distinguished from other regions as it would possess its own administrative and legislative bodies along with the right of adjudication and will remain in charge of its political, military cultural and financial affairs. It will continue to enjoy certain rights in foreign affairs and will be able to keep its military forces. However, representatives of the government of the special administrative region may be appointed to participate in the running of national affairs of the Central Government.<sup>167</sup>

This condensed understanding of China’s historical and policy standpoints can now be used as a backdrop against which the Sino-Tibetan dialogue between the Chinese Central Government and the CTA are situated.

### 5.3 The Trajectory of Dialogue

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, and Mao’s death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping ushered in more liberal policies and was claimed to be open to resolving all matters but Tibetan

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<sup>166</sup> “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue,” accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>.

<sup>167</sup> “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue,” accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>; “Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn,” *The Chinese Government’s Basic Position Regarding Settlement of the Taiwan Question*, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/taiwan/10-4.htm>.

independence through dialogue.<sup>168</sup> This opened a hopeful phase in negotiations with several fact finding delegations until the mid-eighties. This was followed by the five-point peace plan and the Strasbourg proposal with China subsequently inviting Dalai Lama for talks. A venue or time for the talk was not arrived at and by January 1989, China backed out of the proposed talks.<sup>169</sup>

Post 1989, the Dalai Lama lobbied aggressively amongst the international community to promote his agenda for Tibet and pressurize China into reopening talks. The US became actively involved in promoting Sino-Tibetan dialogue with public and policy support for the Middle Way. Direct talks between China and CTA again fell into suspension in 1993 with only unofficial channels subsisting for bear minimum contact. They resumed only nine years later in September, 2002.<sup>170</sup> The period since, has been marked by little meaningful progress, with several bitter episodes, especially during violent uprisings and protests during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The high-profile nature of the protests during the Olympics embarrassed the Chinese into inviting the CTA's thoughts on the way forward. The CTA responded with the *Tibetan Memorandum for Genuine Autonomy* in November 2008.

In response, Chinese white papers demonstrated its hard line on the Middle Way Approach and reiterated China's historical and inalienable right to rule Tibet and demanded the acknowledgement of the same.<sup>171</sup> On January 26<sup>th</sup> 2010, special envoys visited China for the ninth round of discussions with representatives of the Chinese leadership. This was after a gap of near 14 months.<sup>172</sup> The CTA formally presented a clarifying Note relating to the *Memorandum on*

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<sup>168</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 14; *ibid*, 25; Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 316.

<sup>169</sup> "Stalemate in Dialogue (1990-1993) - Central Tibetan Administration," accessed May 3, 2014, <http://tibet.net/sino-tibetan-dialogue-stalemate-in-dialogue-1990-1993/>.

<sup>170</sup> "Chronology of Tibetan-Chinese Relations, 1979 to 2013"; "An Overview of Sino-Tibetan Dialogue - Central Tibetan Administration," accessed May 3, 2014, <http://tibet.net/important-issues/sino-tibetan-dialogue/an-overview-of-sino-tibetan-dialogue/>.

<sup>171</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *The Dalai Clique's Separatist Activities and the Central Government's Policy*, accessed May 25, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/tibet/9-3.htm>.

<sup>172</sup> "Chronology of Tibetan-Chinese Relations, 1979 to 2013."

*Genuine Autonomy* which contained seven points that addressed the fundamental issues raised by the Chinese leadership with suggestions for a way forward in the dialogue process.<sup>173</sup>

The Dalai Lama announced his intention to retire in March 2011 and subsequently Dr. Lobsang Sangay took over the reins of the Central Tibetan Administration as the newly elected *Kalon Tripa*<sup>174</sup> at a ceremony in Dharamsala. The Tibetan cause has achieved greater visibility in the international forum with the EU<sup>175</sup> high representative and the UNHCR<sup>176</sup> advocating dialogue. Dr. Sangay for his part has reiterated his administration's commitment to the Middle Way in his Task force meetings and has made statements to assure the Tibetan people that the mission will not die out.<sup>177</sup> Meanwhile, sporadic civil unrest and self immolations in Tibet continue to take place.<sup>178</sup>

This chapter has traced and examined historical diversions between the CTA and the PRC; specifically how the Chinese perception has manifested in Chinese policy, its state behavior and attitude to the MWA. However, it is not adequate to simply prove that the Chinese resistance to the MWA is a result of its perceptions of history. It is vital to go deeper and arrive at an explanation of how this divergence came to exist and what ideological or strategic catalysts account for it. The next chapter contains the key to this analysis and proposes an adaptation of Wendt's pattern to that sheds further light on these aspects.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Prime Minister.

<sup>175</sup> European Union.

<sup>176</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid; "An Overview of Sino-Tibetan Dialogue - Central Tibetan Administration"; Later, "A 'Middle Way' With China?"; "Interview."

<sup>178</sup> Crowe, "The 'Tibet Question,'" 1121–1126; Woesser, "Tibet's Enduring Defiance"; Edward Wong and Jim Yardley, "100th Self-Immolation Inside Tibet Is Reported," *The New York Times*, February 14, 2013, sec. World / Asia Pacific, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/15/world/asia/100th-self-immolation-inside-tibet-is-reported.html>.

## Chapter 6- Analysis through an 'Adapted' Framework

From the overviews provided in the previous chapter, it is clear that major divergences persist in the trajectory of histories and the concepts of ownership and governance, mainly whether China maintained sovereignty or suzerainty over Tibet up until 1949. It also reveals that the provisions of China's One China policy and National Minority Policy contrast with the concessions it is willing to make in the case of Taiwan but not in the case of Tibet. A major stumbling block cited by the Chinese white papers (see chapter 5) is CTA's non-recognition of Tibet as a historically inalienable part of China. To extrapolate; factors of historical perceptions, identity and interests keep reemerging as stumbling blocks in the issue of Tibet.

To better understand the salience of these factors upon the issue at hand, I propose an adaptation where I 'zoom' into Wendt's cyclical pattern to expose variables implicit but not explicitly dealt therein. These variables are geopolitical factors (ideological, strategic and material) and perceptions of history that I argue feed into this pattern of interaction; shape state interests and identities and therefore state behavior.

### 6.1 An Adaptation of Wendt's Pattern

While I concur with Wendt on his premise that threats are socially constructed, I use this thesis as means to propose that geopolitical factors and alternate perceptions of history of the given situation feed into the pattern of interaction. Through this ,I argue these factors to also shape how two 'states' perceive themselves, each other and therefore the inherent and developed threat perceptions, trust deficits and security dilemmas between them (see Figure 3). The following analysis considers these factors in the China-CTA scenario and proposes an amplification of Wendt's pattern whereby the said factors are exposed<sup>179</sup> in order to arrive at a better understanding of the impasse and more specifically regarding the Chinese resistance itself.

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<sup>179</sup> It is assumed that Wendt realizes the presence of these variables but does not make them explicit in his framework.

The pattern of interaction illustrated in Figure 3, presents this argument. The oval boxes and arrows in red refer to the “exposed factors” with the rest staying true to Wendt’s original work. In particular, figure 3 represents how the strategic geopolitical value embodied in Tibet (for the Chinese) drives the PRC’s state interests and reinforces the perception that Tibet is an inalienable part of China. Furthermore, this thesis argues that the PRC’s and CTA’s alternate perceptions of history bear a transformative effect on their perceptions of themselves and each other (the degree of trust deficits and threat perceptions), which in turn go back to influencing their interests. In addition to this effect, alternate histories are believed to also influence their interpretations of each other’s actions and therefore the situations within which these actions occur. Through this mechanism and reasoning, I argue that geopolitical factors implicit in the Sino-Tibetan stand off along with the perceptions of history therein have a transformative effect on both parties interests and identities, therefore influencing the dynamic between the PRC and the CTA and consequently shaping their (state) behavior.



Now that I have broadly illustrated how Chinese and CTA (state) behaviors are subject to the influence of (state) interest and identities which in turn are constructions influenced by perceptions of history and geopolitics; the next step involves a particular analysis of how specific geopolitical factors interactively influence state interests and identities. I refer back to Wendt's framework where he examined and analyzed variables of sovereignty, cooperation and identity transformation and how they intentionally or unintentionally transform state identity and interests. By doing so, I establish a clear pattern of interaction and linkage between geopolitical factors, state interests & identity; perceptions of history and finally state behavior implicit and explicit in the Sino-Tibetan stand off. The connections that the next section explains are the "arrows" of figure 3 that connect the newly proposed variables with DV<sub>1</sub> and DV<sub>2</sub> of Figure 2. These "arrows" are argued to be the processes (practices) of IV<sub>1</sub>, IV<sub>2</sub>, and IV<sub>3</sub>.

## **6.2 The Role of Historical, Geopolitical Factors within Processes**

This analysis seeks to prove that various factors, (strategic and ideological and material) stemming from the geographic and political realities involving China and the issue of Tibet, have a powerful effect on the current impasse and the efforts at their resolution. These factors influence how the Chinese Central Government and the CTA perceive and define the past; their own and each other's identities and interests. These factors are not analyzed by listing and examining each of them one by one. Instead, they are interwoven around and within Wendt's arguments regarding the transformative effects of sovereignty, cooperation and self critical reinvention on state identity, interests and finally behavior.

This thesis argues that the evolution of the Chinese empire into a sovereign Han nation-state has permanently altered how it perceives history with respect to Tibet, itself, and therefore what it perceives to be its interests. This transition has caused and set about a chain reaction in its state behavior towards the rest of the world (and specifically towards Tibet). Moreover, this effect has continued resonance in the present day due to the continuity in Chinese state ideology which is reflected in its policy rhetoric and perpetuated by active geopolitical factors with regards

to Tibet. In order to understand this transformation, it is necessary to briefly examine the evolution of this shift in ideology.

As has been established in chapter 5, prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, there existed a Confucian ideocracy in the region but this did not strictly constitute into a Chinese empire. The formation of the empire was the accomplishment of the Yuan dynasty under which Tibet occupied a special category through imperial discretion.<sup>180</sup> There were no outright attempts at annexation between 1260 and 1950 and Tibet was administered through indirect rule by successive dynasties. This arrangement did not translate directly into suzerainty or protectorate-ship as per Western definitions but was a special arrangement with no parallels.<sup>181</sup> Dawa has claimed that Confucian China by culture did not ascribe to expansionism despite its deeply embedded sense of territoriality over what it considered sacred ancestral land. Up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, boundary maintenance was the clear Confucian Chinese priority.<sup>182</sup> In other words, there was an absence of geopolitical triggers to alter this fairly benign arrangement.

The change in the erstwhile status quo has its roots in China's initial encounters with the West in the shape of the Opium War in 1840 and the imposition of unequal treaties. This led to a questioning of traditional Confucian statecraft and ideals.<sup>183</sup> Further stimulus and interest from foreign shores (1871-1894) in carving up economic spheres of interest in regions not their own activated threat perceptions previously absent in the Confucian neighborhood.<sup>184</sup> Wendt refers to such questioning of traditional ideas regarding a state's self identity and its embedded structures of interaction as the critical reexamination that follows a voluntary desire of shifting identity and interest paradigms following self reflection.<sup>185</sup>

Through such stimulus and self reflection the Chinese elite came to believe that power politics and strength (rather than Confucian advised virtuous behavior) were more effective tools

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<sup>180</sup> Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 86–87.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, 87–88.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 90–91.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>185</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 420–421.

to ensure state survival in the world arena. This ideology reflected in the rhetoric espoused by Mao, when he claimed that the universal law of nature to be that the strong ruled the weak and that strength was the prerequisite for liberty.<sup>186</sup> This reveals the extent to which this ideology was entrenched in communist China's ambitions to transform China into a military power. Under these conditions, the Confucian-Buddhist arrangement that existed with Tibet, no longer held water and was void.<sup>187</sup> Wendt's framework refers to such a shift in ideology, identity and interest to be predicated on the perceived gains of such a transformation and on the non salience of an older social paradigm.<sup>188</sup> This shift in ideology and state identity also found its manifestation in Chinese bureaucratic discourse which changed its focus from traditional matters such as tribute exchanges and honorific titles to lobbying for the assertion of Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. This behavior also resonates with the self conscious reinvention Wendt speaks of and the subsequent step of "altercasting" whereby China began to act in accordance with its newly acquired identity and thus began to present itself in the role it believed it was meant to perform.<sup>189</sup>

At the time of its "liberation", Tibet was unprepared for such a change in Chinese ideology and statecraft. It was neither able to defend itself nor able to muster support due to its isolationist tendencies. Here, we see the applicability of Wendt's framework once again when he claims the victim of a predatory state to have two choices; to retaliate in self help terms or to capitulate to the predator.<sup>190</sup> Tibet was unable to do the former and ended up doing the latter. In addition to Tibet's capitulation being aided by its absence from the collective security architecture of the United Nations, there also existed a complementary lack of strong geopolitical incentive for the International Community to provide any more than covert support to Tibetan resistance. The British colonial domination of India had already ended in 1947 which terminated

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<sup>186</sup> Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 92.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 93.

<sup>188</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 419.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, 421.

<sup>190</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 408.

its direct interest or agenda in Tibet. With this change in the regional landscape, India's new leaders did not want to sacrifice its relations with China over Tibet and chose a conservative approach of doing as less as possible.<sup>191</sup> Tibet, ordained as a nation under Chinese "suzerainty" by the British in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century continued to be largely recognized as such by the rest of the world.<sup>192</sup> In this situation of apathy, China was free to express itself in its role as the sovereign of Tibet. And so, despite having a distinct non-Han identity and culture, Tibet integrated into the Han nation state of the PRC.<sup>193</sup> This chain of events has resonance with Wendt's framework when he correlates the extent of protection given by the International society to a state on the extent of recognition afforded to it.<sup>194</sup>

With regards to the continuance of China's role in recent times, Wendt's framework argues that sovereignty makes states equate their security with the preservice of territorial rights over specific territories.<sup>195</sup> The notion of the Han nation state and its heightened emphasis on strength-enforced sovereign territoriality of the Communist ideology led to the inevitable sequence of events whereby China, enabled by its recent rapid economic "rise" of the last two decades and the resultant regional clout, has reoriented itself to a new and aggressive foreign policy.<sup>196</sup> This foreign policy features an assertive and confrontational brand of diplomacy that focuses on zealous preservice of its core interests; claims of ownership claims over Xinjiang, Taiwan, Tibet, territorial claims of Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh (with India) and numerous maritime disputes with Japan, South Korea and Vietnam.<sup>197</sup> Under this new foreign policy, China no longer finds it necessary to "keep its head low" using the *taoguangyanghui* policy as advocated

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<sup>191</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 227; Deepak, "India, China and Tibet," 308.

<sup>192</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 227; Deepak, "India, China and Tibet," 308; Goldstein, *Tibet, China and the United States*, 1.

<sup>193</sup> Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 95-96.

<sup>194</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 415.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 414.

<sup>196</sup> Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Foreign Policy as a Rising Power to Find Its Rightful Place," 104.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid*, 102-108.

by Deng Xiaoping until the 1990s.<sup>198</sup> China's confidence in its enhanced power capacity has manifested in a confrontational stance with Western and neighbor states alike and the frequent use of the term "non negotiable" in its positions regarding its core interests.<sup>199</sup>

In this tense nationalism-charged scenario, the agendas of external powers such as India and the US together with the issues of Taiwan, Xinjiang (with the latter's rising separatist violence) and the activity of Tibetan dissident groups prevent any negotiation between the PRC and the CTA being simply about Tibet's future.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, conceding autonomy to Tibet on the basis that it was a *de facto* independent state in 1949 brings up uncomfortable questions about history and possible corollaries about China's expansionist/pseudo-imperialist motives at the time.<sup>201</sup> To wear such a label is not an option for a China whose basic founding ideology is anti-imperialist. The imperialist-expansionist tag would jeopardize its domestic image and internationally tarnish the ideological standpoint on which its perception of China's rightful place is based. Therefore, the MWA, on an ideological and political level with the CTA's assertions to its period of *de facto* independence and invasion in 1949 holds little appeal for the PRC.<sup>202</sup> Moreover, the MWA is quite clear on the kind of political system the CTA envisions for Tibet. It is one based on a Western model of elections, one that Lixiong has called impractical and incompatible with the system in the PRC.<sup>203</sup> Secondly, the zone of peace and the resultant demilitarization envisioned by the CTA is incompatible with China's zealous protection of its disputed border with India and its consideration of Tibet as its backdoor.<sup>204</sup> Therefore, any resolution of Tibet is linked to the larger issues of Chinese sovereignty, politics, its nationalist yet anti-imperialist identity, the defense of its core interests and national security and therefore to the attainment of its perceived rightful position in the regional and global order.

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Zhao, "The Implication of Demilitarization of Tibet for Sino-Indian Relations and Asian Security," 105–107.

<sup>201</sup> Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, 319.

<sup>202</sup> "Issues Facing Tibet Today - Central Tibetan Administration"; He and Sautman, "The Politics of the Dalai Lama's New Initiative for Autonomy," 618.

<sup>203</sup> Lixiong, "A True 'Middle-Way' Solution to Tibetan Unrest," 31–32.

<sup>204</sup> "The Middle-Way Approach."

Apart from the ideological and prestige value that Tibet embodies for the PRC, its significant hydroelectricity and mining potential (discussed in the chapter 3) against the insatiable Chinese demand for energy and industrial raw material adds to the unlikelihood that the Chinese will concede any meaningful autonomy to Tibet. Therefore, the continuing strategic value of Tibet in South, East and Central Asia, makes it a strong geopolitical variable in the larger context for China's position in the world.

China's strategy in Tibet (since the time of Deng Xiaoping) has been to safeguard both its strategic interests and image through development incentives, and other state building measures that encourage Tibetan assimilation into the mainstream "educated" Han society and way of life. The section discussing Chinese policy (5.2) has established how Chinese white papers consistently showcase this development agenda and the progress that has been achieved by it in raising the Tibetan standards of living, thus highlighting the premise that Tibetans work towards the common goal of what China calls unification.<sup>205</sup> This deliberate effort when viewed through the lens of the Wendt's framework resonates with the process of cooperation, whereby states make deliberate attempts to promote integrative action and "reform interests into shared commitments".<sup>206</sup> However, the pre-requisites that Wendt's framework sets for such successful deliberate redefining of identities are not fulfilled in the case of Tibet. These prerequisites are; the absence of negative identification and the perception of comparative gains from such a redefinition<sup>207</sup> (in this case assimilation into the Chinese state). This can be seen in the strong influence that the Dalai Lama continues to command (despite Chinese discouragement) in ethnographic Tibet and also in the influence of the dissident groups that press on for Tibetan independence. This is evident in the widespread agitation seen in various areas of ethnographic

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<sup>205</sup> "Govt. White Papers - China.org.cn," *National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China*, accessed May 23, 2014, <http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/4/>; Davis, "Tibet and China's 'National Minority' Policies."

<sup>206</sup> Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It," 417.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, 419.

Tibet in 2008 till now.<sup>208</sup> Public sentiment is still not in favor of total assimilation into Chinese mainstream society as all the Chinese white papers would have us believe.

The white papers also highlight how differently China views Taiwan and Tibet. The section on China's Tibet policy has revealed that the model China proposes for Taiwan has been framed keeping in mind Taiwan's socio-economic realities. The current disparities between the socio-economic realities of Taiwan and Tibet (even if we discount the degree of backwardness ascribed to Tibet by China) are glaringly clear. China's view of Tibet as a an economically and socially backward polity as opposed to Taiwan makes China reject any proposals that lobby for adopting a similar policy as the one designed for Taiwan.

In addition, a risen China and its aggressive and frequently confrontational foreign policy have made its neighbors and the West increasingly wary. Tibet has in this way found itself on the Western (US & EU) and Asian (India & Japan) agendas over human rights issues and as a means to gain leverage over China.<sup>209</sup> However, as an issue, it garners much sympathy but little overt public support from the international community. This tactic on the part of countries such as India and the US illustrates the strategic geopolitical value of not just Tibet, but the "issue" of Tibet. These external powers use the Tibet card as a bargaining chip when it suits their agendas and its use is regulated based on the level of entente that they share with China at any given time. Moreover, China's historical trust deficit with the capitalist West and its present competitive and sometimes confrontational equation makes China resent the support lent to the Tibetan demand for autonomy. If anything, since China's economic resurgence, the West's support to the Dalai

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<sup>208</sup> Crowe, "The 'Tibet Question,'" 1120–1121.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 1128–1129; laurenc, "The EU Must Challenge Chinese President Xi Jinping on Human Rights and Tibet," Text, *EurActiv | EU News & Policy Debates, across Languages*, (March 26, 2014), <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/eu-must-challenge-chinese-president-xi-jinping-human-rights-and-tibet-301158>; "Japan's Abe: We Want to Help Suffering Tibet People," VOA, accessed June 1, 2014, <http://www.voanews.com/content/article/1544570.html>; "Japanese Parliamentarians Pledge Full Support for Tibet Issue - Central Tibetan Administration," accessed June 1, 2014, <http://tibet.net/2012/11/14/japanese-parliamentarians-pledge-full-support-to-tibet-issue/>; Deepak, "India, China and Tibet," 308.

Lama has only proved counterproductive to the CTA's agenda with regards to acquiring autonomy for Tibet.<sup>210</sup>

The dual policy adopted by the US and India has manifested in a high level of global support in the form of state hospitality, forums for declarations and media coverage for the Dalai Lama and therefore the building of a cult of personality around him. The Dalai Lama is a charismatic spokesperson for the Tibetan cause and his soft power has proven immensely useful to bring attention to the CTA's demands. However, the hospitality and support bestowed on him and the soft power commanded by the Dalai Lama are a continual source of embarrassment for the PRC. Secondly, the Dalai Lama's commitments to the Tibetan diaspora on the issue of establishing a Greater Tibet have limited the concessions that he could make (while at the helm of the CTA) towards resolving the issue of Tibet. This limitation is likely to carry forward to the present leadership of the CTA as well. The PRC is cognizant of this as well of the inevitability of the eventual demise of the aging Dalai Lama who has long been the focal point of the movement for Tibetan autonomy. In the event of the latter and the vacuum that will inevitably follow has allowed the PRC to play a waiting game hoping that the impetus for the movement for autonomy will see its demise with the death of its original champion.

This analysis has established how ideological, strategic and material factors, through the process of the transformation in Chinese state identity, have influenced the way in which the Chinese Central Government defines and perceives Tibet. It becomes clear why the MWA is neither compatible with China's perception of itself as defined by its ideological imperative nor conducive given the strategic and material value embodied by Tibet for China. Furthermore, the salience of issues and actors outside the direct parties involved in the impasse has led us to understand why any discussion of the Tibet issue is prevented from simply being one simply about Tibet.

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<sup>210</sup> Topgyal, "Charting the Tibet Issue in the Sino-Indian Border Dispute," 222; Lixiong, "A True 'Middle-Way' Solution to Tibetan Unrest," 31.

## Concluding Remarks

This thesis has tied together issues of historical divergence, identity and interest transformations with strategic, material and ideological factors to explain the Chinese position on the MWA. It has consistently laid emphasis on the roles of actors and factors both internal and extraneous to the issue but that it believes have critical bearing on the PRC's and the CTA's interests and agenda formulation. This in turn, determines their behavior with one another. With particular emphasis on assessing Chinese state behavior, this work has found that the ideological and systemic transition from Confucian empire to sovereign Han nation state has critically and irrevocably redefined not only Chinese state identity but through it, its state interests. This transformation, perpetuated by the rise in Chinese fortunes and growing regional influence in the last two decades has manifested in a confident and assertive foreign policy posture that enables it to assertively defend its claims over Tibet. At the same time, China's 'rise' has caused discomfiture to the traditional power centers but their use of the Tibetan card as leverage has been metered by China's growing international clout. In this way, this work has shown that state identities and interests are essentially constructions and manifestations of past and present interactions of states/entities over time.

The approach used for this analysis has been borrowed and adapted from Alexander Wendt's framework which examines intentional and unintentional institutional transformations through reciprocal interactions brought on by the practices of sovereignty, cooperation and self reflective reinvention. This thesis justifies its treatment of Tibet as a state for the application of this framework by pointing out that the nature of the issue itself impinges on Tibet's 'stateness' which has been acknowledged as being exceptional by virtue of its special status in the imperial era and its *de facto* independence between 1913 and 1949. In doing so, this particular research project reveals the explanatory potential of this framework towards the study of persistent impasses between states/entities which when viewed superficially, display obvious routes of resolution but when examined more closely, reveal complex and interlinked factors that make

the impasse intractable. Therefore, such analyses can provide useful insight to policy makers while assessing the impact of policy and approaches that advocate for compromise between parties and states. From the scholarly point of view, it contributes to methods through which social scientists can continue to study and investigate why some states continue to behave in the way they do.

In conclusion, the analysis provided by this thesis allows the inference that in an anarchical world, individualized notions of identity, history and ideology still hold explanatory sway over generalized explanations of state behavior.

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